rains. On consideration of the request and in order to ensure milling of paddy, the Government has relaxed the specification of rice in respect of paddy procured in Punjab during the current kharif marketing season.

Implementation of Weights and Measures Act in Packed Milk Industry

2833. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal to amend the Prevention of Food Adultration Act to bring microbial contamination of packed milk at the consumer level is under consideration of Government;

(b) whether Government are insisting that the microbial standards set under BIS standard currently at the plant level be extended to consumer level; and

(c) if so, whether the Weights and Measures Act, 1975 would be strictly implemented in the packed milk industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) No such proposal to amend the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA) is presently under consideration of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

(b) Under PFA Rules, 1955, there is no such requirement or conditions for sale in respect of "milk/packed milk".

(c) The provisions of the Standards of Weights and Measures Act, 1976 and the Standard of Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 1977 are enforced strictly by the State/UTs. Whenever any violation is detected during inspection, cases are initiated by the States/UTs against the offenders under the aforesaid Act/Rules.

Closure of Sugar Mills

2834. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that due to heavy import of sugar from Pakistan and Brazil, with low rate of duty, many sugar mills in country have become sick or are closed; if so, the details for every individual closed sugar mills, State-wise; and

(b) what prevents Government to increase import duty to save the sugar industry, sugar farmers and workers in millions, all over the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) As per Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence And Statistics (DGCIS), Calcutta, a quantity of 63,6306.0 tonnes has been imported during the financial year 1998-99 (up to December, 1998). Out of this, a quantity of 441619.0 tonnes has been imported from Pakistan which constitutes about 69.40% of the total import. Further, a quantity of 44206.0 tonnes has been imported from Brazil which is about 6.95% of the total import during the above period.

Closure/sickness of sugar mills in the country could be due to variety of factors, such as inadequate cane availability, uneconomical size, old age and bad condition of plant and machinery, technical and managerial incompetence, excessively high cane price not commensurate with sales realisation and various other factors. This Ministry has no information about sickness/closure of any sugar mill on account of heavy import of sugar.

(b) The import of sugar was allowed under Open General Licence (OGL) in March, 1994 with zero custom duty. The Government has increased the custom duty on imported sugar thrice in the